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May 20, 2014

The Honorable John McCain  
Member  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kelly Ayotte  
Member  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators McCain and Ayotte:

As you work on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2015, I urge you to continue and build on our efforts in the House Armed Services Committee to permit the operation, maintenance, and training of A-10 pilots within the United States Air Force, both active duty and reserve.

As you said earlier this month, "Congress must include a provision in the fiscal year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act to prohibit the Air Force's divestment of the A-10. Putting the A-10s in type-1000 storage is not a compromise; it is a codification of the Air Force's short-sighted and dangerous proposal to divest their most combat-effective and cost-efficient close air support aircraft. Units will be stood-down, training will no longer occur, and crews will be reassigned." I could not agree more with your assessment of this dangerous and unwise decision.

As you know, the House Armed Services Committee passed an amendment offered by myself, Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler and Congressman Austin Scott that prohibits the Air Force from divesting the A-10 in FY2015. It passed with overwhelmingly bipartisan support and I urge you to work with your colleagues on the Senate Armed Services Committee to ensure the A-10 is protected in the Senate legislation. As the Department of the Air Force looks for ways to accommodate the budgetary pressure it faces, it is imperative that decisions are made with the needs of our ground troops and national security foremost in mind.

Earlier today, Congresswoman Hartzler and I announced the formation of the Congressional A-10 and Close Air Support Caucus to support the airframe and mission. We look forward to building support in the House through this effort as we move towards conference and passage of the NDAA.

Thank you for your leadership in the Senate on this most important issue. I look forward to continuing to work with you to save the A-10.

Sincerely,



RON BARBER  
Member of Congress